

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 04815 101141Z

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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O 101045Z APR 75 ZFF6

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8026

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4815

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, IN, SK,

SUBJECT: SIKKIM

SUMMARY: A NEW CRISIS HAS ERUPTED IN SIKKIM. IN THE WAKE OF TWO ALLEGED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS, THE GOI HAS DISARMED THE CHOGYAL'S PALACE GUARD, AND THE KAZI AND THE SIKKIM CONGRESS PARTY HAVE CALLED FOR THE CHOGYAL'S REMOVAL. WE UNDERSTAND THE CHOGYAL MAY NOW BE UNDER SOME FORM OF "HOUSE ARREST" ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT MONITORED THE BROADCAST REFERRED TO IN TEHRAN'S 3252. PROSPECTS FOR THE CHOGYAL'S PRESERVATION OF HIS POSITION LOOK POOR. END SUMMARY.

1. A NEW CRISIS HAS ERUPTED IN SIKKIM, UNDERSCORING AGAIN THE PRECARIOUSNESS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS THE GOI HAS BEEN PROMOTING IN ITS NEWLY-ACQUIRED "ASSOCIATE STATE" OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. THE INDIAN PRESS REPORTS APRIL 10 THAT THE INDIAN ARMY DISARMED THE CHOGYAL'S FOUR HUNDRED-MAN PALACE GUARD THE PREVIOUS DAY, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT BLOODSHED: ONE GUARD WAS SAID TO HAVE DIED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 04815 101141Z

AND FOUR WERE INJURED AS A RESULT OF A BRIEF EXCHANGE OF FIRE.

THE GUARDS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY CRITICIZED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER KAZI DORJI AND THE SIKKIM CONGRESS PARTY EVER SINCE THE STABBING OF A YOUTH CONGRESS LEADER BY A GUARDSMAN ON THE INDO-SIKKIM BORDER MARCH 4 (NEW DELHI 3170).

2. THE SIKKIM CONGRESS PARTY EARLIER THE SAME DAY ISSUED A STATEMENT PROPOSING WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE FULL INTEGRATION OF SIKKIM INTO THE INDIAN UNION OF STATES. ACCORDING TO THE PARTY, "IT HAS NOW BECOME EVIDENT THAT THE PEOPLE OF SIKKIM CAN REALISE THEIR FULL RIGHTS ONLY IF SIKKIM BECOMES A UNIT OF THE UNION OF INDIA. THIS ALONE WILL ENSURE THAT OUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS WILL BE PROTECTED FOR ALL TIMES TO COME." THE PARTY CONCURRENTLY CALLED FOR THE ABOLITION OF "THE OPPRESSIVE AND UNDEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL FOR ALL TIMES."

3. THE INDIAN PRESS REPORTED APRIL 9 THAT THE KAZI HAD HIMSELF SENT A TELEGRAM IN THE PAST FEW DAYS TO MRS. GANDHI CALLING FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE CHOGYAL. THE TELEGRAM IS SAID TO MARK THE FIRST FORMAL REQUEST BY THE KAZI FOR THE CHOGYAL'S DEPOSITION. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, THE CHIEF MINISTER ACCUSED THE CHOGYAL OF INTRIGUING TO RECOVER POWER AND TO SUPPRESS THE SIKKIMESE PEOPLE, AND CONVEYED TO MRS. GANDHI "THE DEEPEST HOPE OF ALL THE SIKKIMESE PEOPLE THAT OUR LINKS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED AT THE EARLIEST TO ENABLE SIKKIM TO SHARE THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AVAILABLE TO ALL OTHER (INDIAN) STATESMZ

4. BY SOME ACCOUNTS THE KAZI IS SAID TO HAVE SENT HIS MESSAGE AFTER A BOMB-LIKE OBJECT WAS FOUND HIDDEN UNDER THE BACK SEAT OF HIS JEEP ON APRIL 8. THE OBJECT IS NOW BEING ANALYZED BY THE INDIAN AUTHORITIES. ONLY A FEW DAYS EARLIER, ON APRIL 7, THE AIDE DE CAMP OF THE CHOGYAL, CAPTAIN YONGDA, WAS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH HAVING MASTERMINDED AN ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE SEVERAL SIKKIM CONGRESS PARTY MEMBERS ON BEHOALF OF THE CHOGYAL. YONGDA, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, HAS ALLEGEDLY CONFESSED AND IMPLICATED SEVERAL OTHER PLOTTERS. THE CONTENDING SIDES IN SIKKIM HAVE BEEN FREELY EXCHANGING ALLEGATIONS OF ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATIONS SINCE LATE LAST YEAR.

5. WITH TENSION ON THE RISE IN SIKKIM EVER SINCE THE CHOGYAL'S
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 04815 101141Z

RETURN FROM KATHMANDU, THE GOI DESPATCHED FOREIGN MINISTER KEWAL SINGH TO GANGTOK LAST WEEK, BOTH TO ASSAY THE SITUATION AND TO COUNSEL MODERATION. HE REPORTEDLY GAVE A DETAILED BRIEFING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON APRIL 6 SHORTLY AFTER HIS RETURN. JUDGING FROM THE DISARMING OF THE PALACE GUARDS AND STATEMENTS BEING ATTRIBUTED TO "INFORMED SOURCES" IN DELHI'S PRESS APRIL 10, THE GOI IS NOW INCLINED TO COME DOWN HARD ON THE CHOGYAL. HOW HARD IS STILL ANYBNE'S GUESS, BUT "IN-

FORMED SOURCES" ARE BEING QUOTED HERE AS SAYING "WE CANNOT BUT HAVE SYMPATHY WITH THE CHIEF MINISTER, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND ARE EXAMINING THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY THEM"

6. WE HAVE NOT MONITORED THE HAM MESSAGE REPORTED IN TEHRAN'S 3252 BUT WE DO UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHOGYAL'S PALACE HAS BEEN SURROUNDED BY INDIAN FORCES AND THAT HE IS BEING HELD UNDER "HOUSE ARREST" AT THE PRESENT TIME. WE THINK THE GOI WOULD STILL PREFER TO STOP SHORT OF DUMPING THE CHOGYAL ALTOGETHER BUT THE WHOLE SITUATION MAY HAVE GOTTEN SUFFICIENTLY OUT OF HAND THAT THIS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE. AS WE SUGGESTED IN REPORTING LAST YEAR IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE CHOGYAL FADED AWAY COMPLETELY.
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